A

DISCOURSE,

TO WHICH

The PRIZE was adjudged

BY THE

ACADEMY of *DIJON*,

In the YEAR 1750,

On this Queſtion propoſed by that Academy:

Whether the Re-eſtabliſhment of Arts and Sciences has contributed to purify our Morals.

By a CITIZEN of *Geneva*.

Barbarus hic ego ſum, quia non intelligor illis. OVID.

Tranſlated from the *French*, by R. WYNNE, *A. M.*

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BRITISH MUSEUM

THE PREFACE OF THE AUTHOR.

THIS *Queſtion is one of the greateſt and moſt important, that could ever be diſcuſſed. This Diſcourſe does not treat of thoſe Metaphyſical Subtilties, that have engroſſed every Part of Literature, and from which the* Programmas *of the Academy are not always exempt; but the Queſtion is about one of thoſe Truths*

which are eſſential to the Happineſs of Mankind.

I FORESEE that I ſhall with Difficulty be pardoned for having choſen that Side of the Queſtion which I have ventured to eſpouſe. As I boldly oppoſe every Thing that the Men of this Age admire, I cannot but expect to be univerſally blamed; and though I have been honoured with the Approbation of a few wiſe Men, yet I ought not to depend on that of the Public. — But my Reſolution is fixed: I am not ſollicitous to pleaſe the Beaux-Eſprits, *nor our modern* Men of Taſte. *There will be, at all Times, Men who are formed to be Slaves to the Opinions of the Age, the Country, and the Society to which they belong: Such a one in our Days makes a* Free-thinker *and Philoſopher, who, for the ſame Reaſon, would have been but a* Fanatic *in the Time of the* League. *A Man muſt not write for ſuch Readers, if he would live beyond the preſent Age.*

ONE

ONE Word more, and I have done. As I little expected the Honour I have received, I had augmented, and in a Manner new modelled this Diſcourſe, ſince I ſent it away; but now I think myſelf obliged to reſtore it to the State it was in, when it was crowned *with the Prize. I have only thrown in a few Notes, and added two Paragraphs, eaſy to be diſtinguiſhed, which the Academy, perhaps, would not have approved of. I thought that Juſtice, Reſpect, and Gratitude required of me this Advertiſement.*

THE

THE TRANSLATOR TO THE READER.

THE *following Diſcourſe has been highly applauded by ſome learned Men in* France, *and as much condemned by others. Soon after its Publication, an Anſwer appeared to it, ſuppoſed to be written by* Staniſlaus, *late King of* Poland; *to which our Author wrote a Reply, wherein he anſwered all the Objections raiſed againſt his Diſcourſe by that noble Writer.*

ONE

ONE *M.* Gautier, *Profeſſor of Mathematics and Hiſtory, and Member of the Royal Academy of* Belles Letters *at* Nancy, *endeavoured to confute our Author in the* Mercure *for* October, 1751; *but he did not think it worth while to reply in Form. However, he ſhews the Weakneſs and Abſurdity of M.* Gautier's *Arguments, and gives his Reaſons for not anſwering him, in a Letter to his Friend, M.* Grimm, *dated at* Paris *in* November 1751, *and ſigned with his Name* I. I. Rouſſeau.

IF the following Tranſlation ſhould be favoured with the Approbation of the Public, poſſibly the Anſwer may follow it; as it may afford ſome Satisfaction to the Curious, as well on the Account of the Subject it treats of, as on that of its Author.

I SHALL not preſume to ſay any Thing on either Side of the Queſtion, but ſhall preſent

ſent the Reader with the Author's Sentiments, without deſignedly deviating from them in the leaſt; and leave it to every one to approve or condemn, according to his own Judgment, without intereſting myſelf in the Diſpute. I ſhall only obſerve, that the Academy of Dijon, *by honouring this Diſcourſe with the Prize, was ſenſible, that it was ſuperior in Merit to all the other Pieces which were preſented on the Occaſion.*



A DIS-

A

DISCOURSE, &c.

Decipimur ſpecie recti.

THE Queſtion we are to examine is this, *viz.* Whether the Re-eſtabliſhment of Arts and Sciences has contributed moſt to purify, or to corrupt our Morals? Now which Side ſhall I embrace? That Side, Gentlemen, which becomes an honeſt Man, who knows nothing, and does not eſteem himſelf the leſs on that Account.

I AM ſenſible it will be a difficult Taſk to adapt what I have to ſay to the Tribunal before which I appear. How ſhall I preſume to depreciate the Sciences before one of the moſt learned Societies in *Europe*; to ſpeak in Praiſe of Ignorance in a celebrated *Academy*, and to reconcile a Contempt for the Study of Literature, with the Reſpect due to the truly Learned? I foreſaw theſe Contrarieties; and they have not at all diſcouraged me. I conſidered with myſelf, that it is not Science that I abuſe; but Virtue that I defend, before virtuous Men. Probity is ſtill dearer to Men of Worth, than Erudition is to the *Learned*. What have I then to fear? The Knowledge and Penetration of the Aſſembly which hears me? I own it is; but this is on the Account of the *Compoſition*, and not the *Sentiments* of the Speaker. Even the beſt Judges, if they are Men of Equity and Ingenuity, never ſcruple to own themſelves ſometimes in the wrong, in Diſputes of a doubtful and obſcure Nature; and the moſt favourable Circumſtance in a good Cauſe, is to have to do with a Perſon

of

of Knowledge and Integrity, who is a proper Judge in the Affair.

Besides this Motive that encourages, there is another that determines me; which is this, that after I have ſupported the Intereſts of Truth, according to the Light Nature hath given me; let my Succeſs be what it will, there is a *Prize* which I cannot fail of: I ſhall find it in the inmoſt Receſſes of my Heart.

The Firſt Part.

It is a great and glorious *Spectacle* to ſee Man, as it were, riſing out of *nothing* by his own proper Efforts; diſſipating the Darkneſs, in which Nature had involved him, by the Light of his Reaſon; elevating himſelf above his Sphere; *darting* himſelf by Thought into the celeſtial Regions; traverſing, like the Sun with *gigantic* Pace, the vaſt Extent of the Univerſe; and, what is yet greater, and more difficult, entering into himſelf to ſtudy Man, and to know his *Nature*, his *Duty*, and his *End*.

ALL theſe Wonders are renewed within theſe few Generations.

EUROPE was fallen into the *Barbarity* of the earlieſt Ages. The People of this Part of the World, at preſent ſo enlightened, lived, a few Ages ſince, in a State, that was worſe than Ignorance. I know not what *ſcientific Jargon*, more deſpicable than Ignorance itſelf, had uſurped the Name of Knowledge, *and placed* an almoſt invincible Obſtacle to its Return. A Revolution was neceſſary to bring Men to *common Senſe*. A Revolution came at laſt from whence it could be leaſt expected. It was the ſtupid *Muſſulman*, it was the eternal Scourge of *Letters*, who made them revive among us. The Fall of the Throne of *Conſtantine* carried into *Italy* the Ruins of antient *Greece*. *France* enriched herſelf, in her Turn, with thoſe pernicious Spoils. The Sciences immediately followed Letters; to the Art of *Writing* was joined the Art of *Thinking*; a Gradation which ſeems ſtrange, and yet perhaps is but too natural; and we began to perceive the principal Advantage of being converſant with the

Muſes,

Muſes, that of rendering Men more ſociable, by inſpiring them with the Deſire of pleaſing one another with Works, worthy of their mutual Approbation.

The Mind has its Wants as well as the Body. The former conſtitute the *Agreeableneſs*, the latter are the Foundation of Society. While Government and Laws provide for the Safety and Well-being of Men aſſembled in Society; *Arts*, *Sciences*, and *Letters*, leſs *deſpotic*, yet perhaps more powerful; ſpread Garlands of Flowers on the Chains of Iron, with which they are enthralled; ſtifle in them the Sentiments of *original* Liberty, for which they ſeem to be born; make them in Love with their Slavery; and form, what we call, a *civilized* People. Neceſſity at firſt raiſed *Thrones*; but *Arts* and *Sciences* confirmed them. Ye Potentates of the Earth, eſteem great Talents, and protect thoſe that cultivate them *.

Ye

* Princes always ſee with Pleaſure the Increaſe of agreeable Arts and Superfluities, which do not occaſion the Exportation of Money among their Subjects. For beſides, that they nouriſh them in that *Littleneſs* of Soul, ſo proper for Servitude; they know very well, that all thoſe Wants

which

Ye civilized Nations, cultivate and improve them: Happy Slaves! It is to them you owe that fine and delicate *Taſte* you ſo much value yourſelves upon; that Sweetneſs of Character, that *Urbanity* of Manners, which renders the Commerce of Friendſhip among you ſo ſtrict, and yet ſo eaſy; in a Word, that *Appearance* of all the Virtues, without poſſeſſing one.

It was by this Sort of Politeneſs, ſo much the more amiable, as it affects the leſs to ſhew itſelf, that ancient *Rome* and *Athens* formerly diſtinguiſhed themſelves in their boaſted Days of Pomp and Magnificence: It is by the ſame, without Doubt, that our Age and Nation will ſurpaſs all Times and all People. A *Philoſophic* Tone without *Pedantry*; Manners ſo natural, and yet ſo engaging; equally removed,

which the People create to themſelves, are ſo many Chains with which they fetter themſelves. *Alexander* being deſireous of keeping the *Icthyophagi* dependent upon him, obliged them to renounce their Fiſh Diet, and live upon Food common to other Nations; and the Savages of *America*, who always go naked, and live on the Produce of their Hunting, could never be conquered. In ſhort, what Yoke can be impoſed on Men, who are in want of nothing.

from

from *Dutch* Ruſticity and *Tramontane* Buffoonry. Theſe are the Fruits of a *Taſte* acquired by Study, and perfected by the Knowledge of the World.

How agreeable would it be to live amongſt us, if the outward Countenance was always the Image of the Diſpoſitions of the Heart; if *Decency* was Virtue; if our Maxims would ſerve for the Rules of Life; if true *Philoſophy* was inſeparable from the Title of a Philoſopher: But ſuch good Qualities too rarely go together; and Virtue ſeldom marches in ſuch great Pomp. Richneſs of Dreſs may denote an opulent Man, and Elegance a Man of *Taſte:* A healthy and robuſt Man is known by other Marks. It is under the *ruſtic* Habit of a Labourer, and not under the gilding of a Courtier, that we ſhall find Strength and Vigour of Body. *Dreſs* is not more foreign to Virtue, the Health and Vigour of the Soul. The good Man is an *Athletic*, that delights in fighting naked: He deſpiſes thoſe vile Ornaments that clog and retard the Uſe of his Limbs; the

the greateſt Part of which have been invented to hide ſome Deformity.

BEFORE Art had faſhioned our Manners, and taught our Paſſions to ſpeak a borrowed Language, our Behaviour was ruſtic, but natural; different Proceedings inevitably produced different Characters: Human Nature at the Bottom was no better than it is now: But Men found their Security in the Facility of reciprocally penetrating into one another's Deſigns; and this Advantage (of the Value of which we are no longer ſenſible) ſpared them a Number of Vices.

AT preſent, ſince more ſubtle Enquiries, and a more refined *Taſte*, have reduced the Art of pleaſing into Principles, there reigns in our Manners a mean and deceitful *Uniformity*, and all our Minds ſeem to be caſt in the ſame *Mould*. It is always Politeneſs requires, Decency ordains: A Man for ever follows Cuſtom, and not his own *Genius*. One dares no longer appear what he *really* is; and in this perpetual Conſtraint, Men, who form that Flock we call *Society*, placed in the ſame Circumſtances, will all do the ſame Things,

Things, unleſs ſome more powerful Motives divert them from it. One knows not well therefore with whom he has to do: Conſequently we ought to wait for ſome great Occaſion, in order to know our Friend, that is to ſay, we muſt wait till it is too late; ſince it would be an eſſential Matter to know him before thoſe extraordinary Occaſions offer themſelves.

WHAT a Train of Vices is attendant on this Incertitude? There is no more ſincere Friendſhip; no more real Eſteem; no more well grounded Confidence. Suſpicions, Fears, Jealouſies, Coolneſs, Reſerve, Hatred and Treaſon, continually hide themſelves under this uniform and treacherous Veil of Politeneſs; under this ſo much boaſted *Urbanity*, which we owe to this enlighten'd Age. Men no longer profane the Name of the Governor of the Univerſe with *Oaths*, but inſult him with *Blaſphemies*, without giving any Offence to our ſcrupulous Ears. A Man does not boaſt of his *own* Merit, but he detracts from that of *others*. We do not groſsly affront our Enemy, but we calumniate him with Addreſs. National Enmity will ſoon

be extinct, but it will be with the Love of our Country. We ſubſtitute a dangerous Sort of *Sceptiſm*, in the Room of contemptible Ignorance. There are ſome Exceſſes *proſcribed*, ſome Vices diſhonour'd; but there are others honoured with the Name of Virtue: We muſt either poſſeſs, or at leaſt affect them. Let who will boaſt of the Sobriety of the wiſe Men of our Age; for my Part, I ſee nothing in their Way of living, but a Refinement of Intemperance, as unworthy of my Encomium as their artificial Simplicity.

Such is the Purity our Morals have acquired. It is thus we are become good Men. It belongs to *Letters*, to the *Arts* and *Sciences*, to lay claim to their Share in ſo ſalutary a Work. I ſhall only add one Reflection; that is, if an Inhabitant of ſome remote Country ſhould endeavour to form an Idea of the *European* Morals from the State of the Sciences amongſt us, from the Perfection of our Arts, from the Decency of our publick Entertainments*, from the Politeneſs of

* It muſt be obſerved that this is ſaid of *French* Theatrical Entertainments, which are conducted with that Decency,

of our Addreſs, from the Affability of our Diſcourſe, from our continual Demonſtrations of good Will, and from that numerous Concourſe of Men of all Ages and Conditions, that ſeem to be ſo intent on obliging one another reciprocally from the Dawn of Day, till the ſetting of the Sun; I ſay, that Stranger would form a Judgment of our Morals, juſt contrary to what they really are.

WHERE there is no Effect, there is no Cauſe to be ſought for; but here the Effect is certain, the Depravation real, and our Minds are corrupted in Proportion as our Arts and Sciences are advanced towards Perfection. Will it be ſaid that this is a Misfortune peculiar to our Age? No, Gentlemen; the Evils cauſed by our vain Curioſity, are as old as the World itſelf. The daily riſing and falling of the Waters of the Ocean have not been more regularly ſubject to the Courſe of the Luminary that ſhines by Night, than our Morals and Probity to the Progreſs of Arts and Sciences. We have ſeen Virtue vaniſh

cency, and Regard to the Rules of Morality, that is not always to be found on the *Engliſh* Stage.

away in Proportion as their Light was elevated above our *Horizon*, and the ſame *Phænomenon* has been obſerved at all Times and in all Places. Behold *Egypt*, that firſt School of the Univerſe, that Climate ſo fertile under a *Heaven of Braſs*, that famous Country from whence *Seſoſtris*, in ancient Time, marched to conquer the World. It became the Mother of *Philoſophy* and the polite Arts, and ſoon after the Prey of *Cambyſes*, after that of the *Greeks*, the *Romans*, the *Arabs*, and at laſt of the *Turks*, who all conquered it in their Turns.

Conſider *Greece*, formerly peopled with *Heroes*, who twice conquered *Aſia*, once before *Troy*, and once in their own Territories. Learning, as yet in its Infancy, had not corrupted the Hearts of its Inhabitants; but the Progreſs of Arts, the Diſſoluteneſs of Manners, and the *Macedonian* Yoke, followed one another very cloſe; and *Greece* always learned, always voluptuous, and always a Slave, in all its following Revolutions, experienced only a change of *Maſters*. All the Eloquence of *Demoſthenes* could never rouſe up a

Body

Body which Luxury and Arts had enervated.

It was in the Time of *Ennius* and the *Terentii*, that *Rome*, founded by a *Shepherd*, and made illuſtrious by a Race of *Labourers*, began to degenerate. But after the *Ovids*, the *Catullus's*, the *Martials*, and that Croud of obſcene Authors appeared, whoſe very Names alarm our Modeſty, *Rome*, once the Temple of Virtue, became the Theatre of Crimes, the Scandal of the Nations, and the Sport of *Barbarians*. That Capital of the World fell at laſt under the Yoke ſhe had impoſed on ſo many Nations; and the Day of her Fall was the Eve of that, in which they gave one of her Citizens the Title of the *Judge of fine Taſte*.

What ſhall I ſay of that Metropolis of the Eaſtern Empire, which by its Situation ſeemed to be a proper Metropolis for the whole World, that *Aſylum* of the *Arts* and *Sciences*, baniſhed by the reſt of *Europe*, which on that Account perhaps might be rather ſtiled wiſe Men than *Barbarians*? The moſt ſhameful Effects of Debauchery and Corruption;

Corruption; The blackeſt Treaſons, Aſſaſſinations and Poiſons, a Combination of the moſt atrocious Crimes: Theſe are what chequer the Hiſtory of *Conſtantinople*: This is the pure Source from whence iſſue thoſe *Lights* which our Age glories in ſo much.

But why ſhould we ranſack ancient Times for Proofs of a Truth of which we have ſo many living Teſtimonies before our Eyes? There is in *Aſia* an immenſe Country, where Learning promotes Men to the firſt Dignities in the State. If the Sciences purified the Manners, if they taught Men to ſhed their Blood for their Country, if they animated our Courage; the People of *China* ought to be wiſe, free and invincible: But if there is no Vice that does not reign among them, no Crime which is not familiar to them; if neither the great Underſtanding of their Miniſters, nor the pretended Wiſdom of their Laws, nor the Multitude of the Inhabitants of this vaſt Empire, could keep them from falling under the Yoke of the uncivilized, ignorant *Tartar*: What did all their learned Men avail them? What Fruit did their Country gather from

from thoſe Honours that were heaped upon them? It was to be peopled with Slaves and Villains.

By way of Contraſt to theſe Pictures, let us view the Manners of a ſmall Number of Nations, who being preſerved from this Contagion of vain *Science*, rendered themſelves happy by their Virtues, and became an Example to the reſt of the World. Such were the ancient *Perſians*, an extraordinary People, among whom Virtue was publickly taught as the *Sciences* are among us; who conquered *Aſia* with much Eaſe; and who have had this Honour done them; namely, that the Hiſtory of their *Inſtitutions* has paſſed for a *Philoſophic Romance*. Such were the *Scythians*, of whom there are ſuch noble Elogies extant: Such the *Germans*, whoſe Simplicity, Innocence and Virtue, were the pleaſing Theme of a Pen, tired with painting the Crimes and Enormities of a learned, opulent and voluptuous People. Such had *Rome* itſelf been in the Time of its Poverty and Ignorance. Laſtly, ſuch has that *ruſtic* Nation ſhew'd itſelf, even down to our Days, which is ſo renowned for its Courage, that Adverſity could

could never depreſs it, and ſo remarkable for its Fidelity, that Example has never been able to corrupt it *.

It is not oweing to Stupidity that theſe have preferr'd other Exerciſes to thoſe of the Mind. They are not ignorant that in other Countries, a Set of indolent Men paſs away their Lives in diſputing on the *ſovereign* Good, on *Virtue* and *Vice*; and that ſome haughty *Reaſoners*, beſtowing on themſelves the higheſt Encomiums, confounded all other Nations under the deſpicable Name of *Barbarians*; but they have examined their Morals, and learned to deſpiſe their Learning †.

Should

* I dare not ſpeak of thoſe happy Nations, who are Strangers to the Names of thoſe Vices which we take ſo much Pains to ſuppreſs; of thoſe Savages of *America*, whoſe ſimple and natural Polity *Montagne* does not ſcruple to prefer, not only to the Laws of *Plato*, but even to all the moſt perfect *Syſtems* that *Philoſophy* could form for the Government of a People. He cites a Number of ſtriking Examples of theſe People; but, adds he, they wear no Stockings!

† Let me aſk what Opinion the *Athenians* themſelves could have of Eloquence, when they baniſhed it with ſo much Care from that juſt Tribunal, from the Deciſions of which the

SHALL I forget that it was in the very Boſom of *Greece*, that we ſaw a City raiſed as famous for its happy Ignorance as for the Wiſdom of its Laws, that Republick of *Demi-Gods* rather than Men, ſo ſuperior to *Humanity*, did their Virtue appear? O *Sparta!* Thou eternal Reproach to vain Learning! While all ſorts of Vices, introduced by the polite Arts, entered together into *Athens*, while a Tyrant collected with ſo much Care, the Works of the *Prince of Poets*, thou didſt baniſh from within thy Walls, the *Arts*, the *Artiſts*, the *Sciences*, and the *Learned*.

THE Event ſhewed this Difference. *Athens* became the Seat of *Taſte* and Politeneſs, the Country of *Orators* and *Philoſophers*. The Elegance of their Buildings was anſwerable to that

the Gods themſelves never appealed? What did the *Romans* think of *Phyſick*, when they expelled the *Phyſicians* from their Republick? And when ſome ſmall *Remains* of Humanity prompted the *Spaniards* to forbid their *Lawyers* entrance into *America*: What Idea muſt they have conceived of the Law? Would not a Man be apt to ſay, that they thought by this one Act to make amends for all the Injuries they had done thoſe unhappy *Indians*?

of their Language. There you might obſerve on every Side the *Canvas*, and the *Marble* animated by the Hands of the moſt expert *Maſters*. It is from *Athens* we have thoſe ſurprizing Works, which will ſerve for Models in all corrupt Ages. The Picture of *Lacedemon* is leſs brilliant. *There*, ſay the *Athenians*, *Men are born virtuous, and the very Air of the Country ſeems to inſpire Virtue.* We have nothing remaining of its Inhabitants but the Memory of their *heroic* Actions: Are ſuch *Monuments* of leſs Value to us than the curious Marbles which *Athens* has left us?

Some Sages, it is true, ſtemmed the general Torrent, and preſerved themſelves from Vice in the Seat of the *Muſes*. But let us hear the Judgment which the greateſt, and moſt unfortunate among them formed of the *Learned* and *Artiſts* of his Time.

" I have, ſays he, examined the Poets; and " I look upon them as a Set of Men whoſe Ta- " lent impoſes upon themſelves and others, who " pretend to be wiſe, whom others take for ſuch, " and who in Reality are nothing leſs.

" From

" From the *Poets*, continues *Socrates*, I paſ-
" ſed to the *Artiſts*. No-body could be more
" ignorant of the *Arts* than I was: No-body
" more convinced that they poſſeſſed ſome very
" valuable Secrets. Notwithſtanding all this,
" I found that their Condition is no better than
" that of the *Poets*, and that the one and the
" other labour under the ſame Prejudices: Be-
" cauſe the moſt expert among them, who ex-
" celled in their Country, looked upon them-
" ſelves as the wiſeſt of Men. This Preſumption
" has, in my Opinion, tarniſhed all their Excel-
" lence; inſomuch, that putting myſelf in the
" Place of the *Oracle*, and aſking myſelf the
" Queſtion, whether I ſhould chooſe to be what
" I am, or to be what they are; to know what
" they have learned, or to know that I *know no-
" thing*: I have made this anſwer to God and
" myſelf; I would remain as I am.

" We know not neither the *Sophiſts*, nor the
" *Poets*, nor the *Orators*, nor the *Artiſts*, nor
" myſelf what conſtitutes *Truth*, *Goodneſs* and
" *Beauty*: But there is this Difference between

 " us,

" us, that though theſe People know *Nothing*, " they believe that they know *Something*; when " I at the ſame Time that I know Nothing, at " leaſt make no Doubt of it. So that all this " Superiority, which is aſcribed to me by the " *Oracle*, comes only to this, that I am con- " vinced that I know Nothing of what I am ig- " norant of."

You ſee here the wiſeſt of Men in the Judgment of the Gods themſelves; the moſt learned of the *Athenians* in the Opinion of all *Greece*: *Socrates* himſelf, making an Encomium on Ignorance! Can we believe, if he was riſen from the dead, and come amongſt us, that our learned Men and our *Artiſts* would make him alter his Opinion? No, Gentlemen, this *juſt Man* would perſiſt in deſpiſing our vain *Sciences*; he would not aſſiſt in ſwelling that Heap of Books, which pour upon us like a Deluge on all Sides, and would leave his Diſciples and his Poſterity, as he has already done, no other Precept, than the Example and Memory of his Virtue. It is a glorious Taſk to inſtruct Mankind in this Manner!

SOCRATES had begun at *Athens*, and the elder *Cato* continued at *Rome* to inveigh againſt thoſe artful

artful and ſubtle *Greeks*, who ſeduced the Virtue, and enfeebled the Courage of their Fellow-Citizens. But *Arts*, *Sciences* and *Logic* prevailed ſtill: *Rome* was filled with *Philoſophers* and *Orators*: They neglected *Military* Diſcipline, they deſpiſed *Agriculture*, they embraced the *Philoſophic* Sects, and forgot their *Country*. The Names of *Epicurus*, *Zeno*, and *Arceſilas* ſucceeded the ſacred Names of *Liberty*, *Diſintereſtedneſs*, and *Obedience to the Laws*. *Since learned Men have begun to make their Appearance among us*, ſay their Philoſophers, *good Men have been under an Eclipſe*. 'Till that Time the *Romans* were ſatisfied with *practiſing* Virtue; all was loſt, when they began to *ſtudy* it.

O *Fabricius!* What would thy great Soul have thought, if unhappily recalled to Life, thou hadſt ſeen the pompous Face of that *Rome*, which was ſaved by thy Arm, and which thy vederable Name rendered more Illuſtrious than all her Conqueſts? " Gods! wouldeſt thou haveſaid, " what is become of thoſe Straw-built Sheds, " thoſe homely Cottages, which Moderation " and Virtue formerly inhabited? What fatal

Splendor

" Splendor hath ſucceeded the *Roman* Simplici-
" ty? What means this ſtrange Language,
" theſe effeminate Manners? To what Purpoſe
" are theſe Statues, theſe Pictures, theſe Edifi-
" ces? Ye Fools what have you done? You,
" who were the Maſters of Nations, render
" yourſelves the Slaves of thoſe Men whom you
" had conquered. Is it the *Orators* that govern
" you? Is it to enrich *Architects*, *Painters*, *Sta-*
" *tuaries* and *Players* that you have deluged
" *Greece* and *Aſia* with your Blood? Are the
" Spoils of *Carthage* become the Prey of a *Mu-*
" *ſician? Romans*, haſten to overturn thoſe *Am-*
" *pitheatres*; break to Pieces thoſe *Statues*;
" burn thoſe *Pictures*; drive away thoſe Slaves
" who ſubdue you, and whoſe fatal *Arts* corrupt
" you! Let other Hands render themſelves Fa-
" mous by ſuch vain Talents; the only Talent
" worthy of *Rome*, is that of conquering the
" World, and to make Virtue reign in it. When
" *Cyneas* took our *Senate* for an Aſſembly of
" Kings, he was not dazzled by a vain Pomp,
" nor by a ſtudied Elegance. He did not hear
" there that trifling Eloquence, which is the ſole
" Study and Delight of inſignificant Men. What

" was

" was it then that *Cyneas* ſaw ſo Majeſtic? O my " Fellow-Citizens! He ſaw a *Spectacle*, which " neither your Riches, nor your Arts can ever " exhibit; the nobleſt *Spectacle* that ever ap- " peared under Heaven, an Aſſembly of two " Hundred virtuous Men, who deſerved to com- " mand at *Rome* and to govern the World."

But let us paſs over the Diſtance of Times and Places, and ſee what paſs'd in our own Country, and before our Eyes; or rather let us lay aſide theſe odious Paintings that may offend our Delicacy, and ſpare ourſelves the Trouble of repeating the ſame Things under other Names. I did not invoke the *Manes* of *Fabricius* in vain; and what have I made this great Man ſay, which I might not have put in the Mouth of *Lewis* XII. or *Henry* IV? It is true *Socrates* would not have drank the *Hemlock* among us; but he would have drank in a much more bitter Cup, inſulting *Rallery* and *Contempt*, which are a hundred Times worſe than Death itſelf.

Thus you ſee how Luxury, Diſſoluteneſs of Manners and Slavery have at all Times been the

Chaſtiſe-

Chaſtiſement of the proud Efforts we have made, to energe out of that happy Ignorance, in which the Wiſdom of the Supreme Being had placed us. The thick Veil with which he has covered all his Works, ſeem to give us ſufficient Warning, that we are not deſigned for vain Enquiries. But is there any of his Leſſons by which we might have profited that we have neglected with Impunity? Know then for once, ye Nations, that Nature would fain preſerve you from *Science*, as a tender Mother ſnatches a dangerous Weapon out of the Hands of her Child; that all the Secrets ſhe conceals from you are ſo many Evils, from from which ſhe guards you, and that the Pain and Trouble you find in acquiring Knowledge, is not the leaſt of her Favours. Men are perverſe enough; they would be ſtill worſe, if they had the Misfortune to be *born* wiſe and learned.

How mortifying are theſe Reflections to human Nature! How ought they to humble our Pride! How! Probity the Child of Ignorance! — Science and Virtue incompatible! — What *Conſequences* might we not draw from ſuch *Premiſes*? But to reconcile theſe ſeeming Contradictions,

tions, we need only examine at a nearer View thoſe proud Titles, which dazzle our Eyes, and which we ſo undeſervedly beſtow on *human* Learning. Let us therefore conſider *Arts* and *Sciences*, as they are in themſelves: Let us ſee the Reſult of their Progreſs; and let us no longer heſitate to agree in all thoſe Points, where our Reaſoning ſeems to coincide with Concluſions drawn from Hiſtory.

The Second PART.

IT was an ancient Tradition which paſſed from *Egypt* into *Greece*, that ſome God, who was an Enemy to the Repoſe of Men, was the Inventor of the Sciences *. What Opinion then muſt

* We eaſily ſee the *Allegory* of the Fable of *Prometheus*; and it does not appear, that the *Greeks*, who chained him down to *Caucaſus*, had a more favourable Opinion of him, than the *Egyptians* had of their God *Teuthus*. "The *Satyr*, "ſays an antient Fable, would fain kiſs and embrace Fire "the firſt Time he ſaw it; but *Promotheus* cried out to him: "*Satyr*, thou wilt lament the Loſs of thy Beard, for it burns "as ſoon as it is touched."

the *Egyptians* themſelves, among whom they had their Birth, have entertained of them? They ſaw at a nearer View the Sources from whence they ſprung. In ſhort, whether we turn over the Annals of the World, or whether we ſupply uncertain *Chronicles* with *Philoſophical* Conjectures, we ſhall never find an Origine to the human Sciences, anſwerable to the Idea we love to form of them. *Aſtronomy* had its Riſe from Superſtition; *Eloquence* from Ambition, Hatred, Flattery and Lying; *Geometry* owes its Birth to *Avarice*; *Natural Philoſophy* to a vain Curioſity, and even *Ethics* to human Pride. The *Arts* and *Sciences* are therefore indebted for their Origine to our Vices: If they owed it to our Virtues, we ſhould leſs doubt of the Advantages accruing from them.

The Blemiſh in their *Birth* is but too eaſily traced in their *Objects*. What ſhall we do with *Arts* without Luxury which nouriſhes them? Without the Injuſtice of Men, what End would the Study of the *Law* ſerve? What would become of *Hiſtory*, if there were neither Tyrants, nor Wars, nor Conſpirators? In a Word, who would

would ſpend his Life in barren Contemplations, if every one, conſulting nothing but Man's Duty, and the Wants of his Nature, had no Time to beſtow but upon his Country, upon the *Wretched*, and upon his *Friends?* Are we therefore made to dye, chained on the Brink of that *Well* where *Truth* is retired? This Reflection alone ought at firſt Sight to deter every Man who ſeriouſly ſeeks for Inſtruction in the Study of *Philoſophy*.

What Dangers! what wrong Paths in the *Inveſtigation* of Sciences? By how many Errors, a thouſand Times more dangerous, than Truth is uſeful, muſt we not paſs to arrive at her. The Diſadvantage is plain; for *Falſhood* is ſuſceptible of an Infinity of Combinations; but *Truth* has but one *Mode of Exiſtence*. Beſides, who is there that ſincerely ſeeks her? By what Marks is ſhe certainly known to the moſt unprejudiced Enquirer? In this Multiplicity of different Sentiments, What ſhall be our *Criterion* to form a right Judgment of her? * And,

* The leſs a Man knows, the more he thinks he knows.

Did

what is moſt difficult of all, if, by good Luck, we find Truth at laſt, who is there among us that knows how to make a good Uſe of her.

If the Sciences are vain in the Objects they propoſe, they are ſtill more dangerous in the Effects they produce. Born in Idleneſs, they nouriſh it in their Turn; and the irreparable Loſs of Time is the firſt Prejudice they neceſſarily do to Society. It is a great Evil in a *political*, as well as in a *moral* Senſe, not to do Good: And every uſeleſs Citizen ought to be regarded as a pernicious Perſon. Anſwer me then, illuſtrious Philoſophers! You by whoſe Means we know, in what *Ratio* Bodies are mutually attracted in *Vacuo*; What is the Proportion of the *Areas*, which the *Planets* in their Revolutions run over in *equal Times?* What *Curves* have conjugated Points, and Points of *Inflection* and *Retrogreſſion?* How the Soul and Body correſpond together without

Did the *Peripateties* doubt of any Thing? Has not *Deſcartes* conſtructed the Univerſe with *Cubes* and *Vortices?* And is there at this Day in *Europe* ever ſo mean a *Naturaliſt* who does not boldly explain that profound Myſtery of *Electricity*, which perhaps will always remain ſo, in the Opinion of true Philoſophers.

any

any Communication, like two Clocks or Dials; What Stars may be inhabited? What Insects are reproduced in an extraordinary Manner? Answer me, I say, you, from whom we have received such sublime Discoveries; had you taught us none of these Things, should we have been less numerous, less civilized, less formidable, less flourishing, or more perverse? But to return to the Importance of your Productions; if the Labours of the most knowing of our learned Men, and of our best Citizens, procure so little Advantage, tell me, what we ought to think of that Croud of obscure Writers, and idle Men of Letters, who are an entire Burden to the State, by devouring its Substance.

IDLE, did I say? — Would to God they were so indeed! Our Morals would be the less corrupt, and Society more peaceful. But these vain, paultry Declaimers are seen every where, armed with their pernicious Paradoxes; sapping the very Foundation of our Faith, and annihilating Virtue. They scornfully smile at the Mention of those obsolete Words, of *our Country* and *Religion*, and devote their Talents and their Philo-

sophy

ſophy to vilify and deſtroy every Thing that is ſacred among Men. It is not that they hate either Virtue or our Doctrines at the Bottom; but it is the publick Opinion they are Enemies to; and in order to bring them to the Foot of the *Altar*, it would be ſufficient to baniſh them among *Atheiſts*. Thou pernicious Paſſion of diſtinguiſhing ourſelves, what canſt thou not do?

THE Abuſe of *Time* is a great Evil. There are other Inconveniences which are ſtill worſe that attend on Learning and Arts. Such is Luxury, which like them owes its Birth to Idleneſs and the Vanity of Mankind. Luxury ſeldom goes without the Arts and Sciences; and they never without Luxury. I am ſenſible that our Philoſophy, always fruitful in extraordinary Maxims, pretends, contrary to the Experience of all Ages, that Luxury conſtitutes the Splendor of States. But, not to mention the Neceſſity of ſumptuary Laws, will it preſume to deny, that good Morals are eſſential to the Duration of Empires, and that Luxury is diametrically oppoſite to good Morals? Granting that Luxury is a certain Sign of Riches, or, if you pleaſe, that it

even

even ſerves to multiply them: What Concluſion muſt we draw from this Paradox, which is ſo worthy of being produced in our Days; and what will become of Virtue, if we muſt acquire Wealth at any Rate? Antient Treatiſes of Politics continually made mention of *Morals* and *Virtue*; ours ſpeak of nothing but *Commerce* and *Money*. One will tell you that, in ſuch a Country, a Man is worth juſt as much as he can be ſold for at *Algiers*; another, following this Calculation, will find ſome Countries, where a Man is worth nothing, and other Places again, where he is valued at leſs than nothing. They value Men like Herds of Cattle. According to them, a Man is worth no more to the State, than the Conſumption he makes. At this Rate one *Sybarite* would have been well worth thirty *Lacedemonians*. Let a Man gueſs therefore, which of thoſe two Republics, that of *Sparta*, or *Sybaris*, was conquered by a Handful of Peaſants, and which made *Aſia* tremble.

The Monarchy of *Cyrus* was conquered by a Prince who was poorer than the leaſt of the *Satrapæ* of *Perſia*, with only thirty Thouſand Men; and

and the *Scythians*, who were the pooreſt of all Nations, reſiſted the moſt powerful Monarchs in the Univerſe. Two famous Republics diſputed the Empire of the WORLD; the one was very rich, and the other poſſeſſed nothing, and yet the latter deſtroyed the former. The ROMAN Empire, after having ſwallowed up all the Riches of the Univerſe, became in its Turn, the Prey of a People, who did not ſo much as know what Riches were. The *Francs* conquered the *Gauls*, and the *Saxons England*, without any other Treaſures but their Bravery, and their Poverty. A Troop of poor Mountaineers, whoſe Deſires were confined to a few Sheep-Skins, after having humbled the Pride of the *Auſtrian*, cruſhed to Pieces the opulent and formidable Houſe of *Burgundy*, which made all the Potentates of *Europe* tremble. In ſhort, all the Power, and all the Wiſdom of the Heir of CHARLES the Fifth, ſupported by all the Treaſures of the *Indies*, were not able to withſtand a Handful of Fiſhermen. * Let our

* The *Hollanders* whoſe chief Employment was the *Herring-Fiſhery*. A ſurprizing Inſtance of the Force of Induſtry and Frugality, and of the Importanee of this uſeful Branch of Commerce!

Politicians

Politicians deign to ſuſpend their Calculations for a while, to reflect on theſe Examples; and let them learn for once, that every Thing may be procured with Money —— but MORALS and CITIZENS.

WHAT is it then that we are contending for in this Diſpute about Luxury? Why it is to know, which is of the greateſt Importance to an Empire, to be brilliant and momentary, or virtuous and durable. *Brilliant*, did I ſay, — but with what Luſtre? A Taſte for *Pride* ſeldom aſſociates in the ſame Mind, with that for *Honeſty*. No — It is impoſſible for Minds, degraded by a Multiplicy of frivolous Cares, ever to elevate themſelves to any Thing, that is great or ſublime; * and if they had the Power they would want the Courage to do it.

EVERY *Artiſt* would fain be applauded. The Encomiums of his Cotemporaries are the moſt conſiderable Part of his Reward. What will he do then, to obtain them, if he has the Misfortune to be born at a Time when, and in a

* See *Longinus* on the Sublime.

Country where learned Men being much in Vogue, have put it in the Power of a trifling Set of Youngſters to give the Word; where Men have ſacrificed their Taſte to thoſe, who tyrannize over their Liberty; * where, becauſe one of the Sexes dares not approve of any Thing, but what is proportioned to the Puſillanimity of the other, the nobleſt Pieces of *Dramatic* Poetry fall to the Ground, and *Prodigies* of Harmony and Muſic are diſregarded? What will he do, Gentlemen, in ſuch a Caſe? He will lower his

* I am far from thinking, that this Aſcendant, which the Women have over us, is an Evil in itſelf. It is a *Preſent*, that Nature has made them, for the Benefit of Mankind: If it was better regulated, it might be productive of as many Advantages, as it is now of Evils. We are not ſufficiently ſenſible of the Benefits that would accrue to Society, from a better Education beſtowed on this Half of the human Species, which entirely governs the other. The Men will always be, what the Women will pleaſe to make them, and will endeavour to render themſelves agreeable to the other Sex: If you would therefore have them magnanimous and virtuous, you muſt teach the Women, in what Virtue and Greatneſs of Soul conſiſt. The Reflections ariſing from this Subject, which *Plato* formerly treated of, deſerve to be better explained, by a Pen capable of writing after ſo great a Maſter, and of defending ſo noble a Cauſe.

Genius

Genius to the Level of the Age he lives in, and will rather chooſe to compoſe Works of the common Stamp, that are admired during his Life, than thoſe of an extraordinary Nature, that would not be regarded, till a long Time after his Death. Tell me, celebrated *Aroüet*, how many ſtrong, maſculine Beauties have you ſacrificed to our falſe Delicacy, and how many great and noble Deſigns our Taſte for Shew and Finery, ſo fertile in Trifles, has coſt you?

It is thus Diſſoluteneſs of Manners, the neceſſary Conſequence of Luxury, brings in its Turn, a Corruption of *Taſte* along with it. If by Chance, among Men of extraordinary Talents, there may be found one, who has Firmneſs of Mind; who refuſes to fall in with the Genius of the Age, and to debaſe himſelf by puerile Productions, hard is his Fate! Would to Heaven, this were what I only prognoſticate, and not what I relate from Experience! *Carle*, *Pierre*; the Time is come, when that Pencil, deſigned to make our Temples more Majeſtic by ſacred and ſublime Portraits, muſt fall from thy Hand, or be proſtituted to adorn the Pannels of a Cha-

riot with laſcivious Paintings. And thou, Rival of *Praxiteles* and *Phidias*, thou, whoſe Chizel the Antients would have employed to make them Gods, capable of excuſing their Idolatry to our Eyes; inimitable PIGAL, thy Hand muſt debaſe itſelf by carving a *Baboon* or a *Monkey*, or remain idle and unemployed.

WE cannot reflect on Morals, without pleaſing ourſelves by recalling the Idea of the Simplicity of the earlieſt Ages. It is a pleaſant Shore, adorned only by the Hands of Nature, towards which we inceſſantly turn our Eyes, and with Regret find ourſelves ſo far removed from it. When Men were innocent and virtuous, and loved to have the Gods to be Witneſſes of their Actions, they dwelt together in the ſame Cottages; but as ſoon as they became wicked and vicious, they were tired of thoſe troubleſome Spectators, and baniſhed them into magnificent Temples. They drove them from thence at laſt, to ſet up themſelves in their Places, or at leaſt the Temples of the Gods could no longer be diſtinguiſhed from the Houſes of the Citizens. It was then that Depravation of Morals was at the Height; and Vi-

ces

ces never roſe to a more ſurprizing Pitch, than at the Time when they were ſeen ſupported, if I may ſo expreſs myſelf, on marble Columns at the Entrance of the Palaces of the Great, and graved on *Corinthian Capitals.*

WHILE the Conveniences of Life are multiplied, while Arts advance to Perfection, and Luxury increaſes, true Courage is enervated, and the *military* Virtues vaniſh away; and this likewiſe is the Effect of the Sciences, and all thoſe Arts, which are exercis'd in the Shade of the Cloſet.

WHEN the *Goths* ravaged *Greece*, all the Libraries were ſaved from the Flames by this Opinion, induſtriouſly propagated among them by one of their Chiefs, that it was neceſſary to leave the Enemy ſuch *Goods*, as were proper to divert them from military Exerciſes, and to amuſe them with idle and ſedentary Occupations. CHARLES VIII ſaw himſelf Maſter of *Tuſcany* and the Kingdom of *Naples*, almoſt without drawing the Sword; and all his Court attributed this unexpected Facility, to the Princes and *Nobleſſe* of *Italy*, being more intent on rendering them-

themſelves learned and ingenious, than they were on their Endeavours to become vigorous and warlike. In Effect, all Examples teach us, ſays the Man of Senſe who relates thoſe two Paſſages, that in martial Diſcipline, and all others of the ſame Nature, the Study of the Sciences is more apt to ſoften and enervate, than to confirm and animate our Courage.

THE ROMANS owned, that military Virtue was extinguiſhed among them, in Proportion as they began to be *Connoiſſeurs* in Pictures, in Statues, in Vaſes of Gold and Silver, and to cultivate the polite Arts; and as if this famous Country were deſtined always to ſerve for an Example to other Nations, the Exaltation of the Family of the MEDICIS, and the Reſtoration of *Letters*, cauſed that warlike Reputation, which *Italy* ſeemed to have recovered a few Ages ſince, to fall to the Ground once more, and perhaps for ever.

THE antient Republics of *Greece*, with that Wiſdom which was ſo conſpicuous in moſt of their Inſtitutions, forbad their Citizens the Exerciſe of thoſe unactive, ſedentary Trades, which,

by

by clogging and corrupting the Body, ſo ſoon enervated the Vigour of the Mind. Indeed, with what Eye do we imagine thoſe Men can face Hunger, Thirſt, Fatigues, Dangers and Death, who are depreſſed with the leaſt Want, and diſcouraged with the leaſt Pain? With what Courage will the Soldiers ſupport thoſe exceſſive Hardſhips, which they have not in the leaſt been accuſtomed to? With what Ardour will they make forced Marches, under the Command of Officers, who have not even the Strength to travel on Horſeback? Let not the renowned Valour of our modern Warriours, who are ſo wiſely diſciplined, be uſed as an Objection to what I have advanced. You may well boaſt of their Bravery in the Day of Battle, but you do not tell me, how they bear Exceſs of Fatigue, how they reſiſt the Rigour of the Seaſons, and the Inclemency of the Air. A little Snow or Sunſhine, a Privation of ſome of the Superfluities of Life, is enough to conſume and deſtroy, in a few Days, the beſt of our Armies. Intrepid Warriours! Suffer, for once, the Truth, which you ſo ſeldom hear; I know you are brave; you would have triumphed with HANNIBAL at *Cannæ*, and at *Traſimene*;

CÆSAR

CÆSAR with you would have paſſed the *Rubicon*, and enſlaved his Country — But it is not with you that the former would have paſs'd the *Alps*, and the latter have conquered your Anceſtors.

THE Succeſs of War does not always depend on Combats; and there is an Art ſuperior to that of gaining Battles, which Generals ought to acquire. Such a one runs with Intrepidity to the Fire of the Enemy, who nevertheleſs is a very bad Officer. Perhaps in the Soldiery itſelf, a little more Strength and Vigour would be more ſerviceable, than ſo much Bravery which cannot preſerve them from Death; and what Difference is it to the State, whether its Troops periſh by Fevers and the Cold, or by the Sword of the Enemy.

IF the Cultivation of the Sciences is prejudicial to *military*, it is much more ſo to *moral* Qualifications. A ſenſeleſs Education adorns our Minds, and corrupts our Judgments from our tender Years. I obſerve on all Sides immenſe Eſtabliſhments, where Youth is educated at a great Expence, and inſtructed in every Thing, but the

Duties

Duties incumbent on Man. Your Children are ignorant of their own Language; but they ſpeak others that are no where in Uſe *: They know how to compoſe Verſes †, which they can hardly underſtand. Without knowing how to diſtinguiſh Error from Truth, they poſſeſs the Art of making them known to others by ſpecious Arguments §: but as for theſe Terms of Magnanimity, Equity, Temperance, Humanity, Courage, they know not what they mean. The endearing Name of their COUNTRY never ſtrikes their Ears; and if they ever hear the Name of GOD mentioned, it is to make them *afraid*, rather than to inſpire them with a reverential Awe of him ‖. I would as ſoon chooſe, ſays a certain wiſe Man, that my Scholar ſhould paſs away his Time in playing at Ball; the Body, at leaſt, would grow more active by it. I know that Children muſt be employed, and that Idleneſs is more dangerous, and more to be dreaded on their Account. What muſt they learn then? This is really a fine Queſtion! Let them learn

* The learned Languages. † Poetry. § Logic.
‖ Penſ. Philoſophy.

what they ought to do when they become MEN *; and not what they ought to forget.

OUR

* Such was the Education of the *Spartans*, even with Regard to the greateſt of their Kings. It is, ſays *Montagne*, a Thing that deſerves our particular Conſideration, that, in that excellent Polity of *Lycurgus*, which was ſo extraordinary for its Perfection, ſo careful in the Education of Children, and ſo near the Seat of the Muſes; ſo little mention is made of Learning; as if that generous Youth, diſdaining every other Yoke, inſtead of our Maſters of the Sciences, had need only of Maſters of Fortitude, Prudence, and Juſtice.

Let us now hear how the ſame Author ſpeaks of the antient *Perſians*. *Plato*, ſays he, tells us, that the Heir in their Royal Succeſſion was educated in this Manner. Immediately after he was born, he was delivered, not to Women, but to Eunuchs, who were in the greateſt Credit with the King, on account of their Virtue. Theſe Eunuchs undertook the Charge of rendering his Body beautiful and healthy; and at ſeven Years of Age they trained him up to Riding and Hunting. When he arrived at Fourteen, they put him in the Hands of four Perſons, the moſt renowned for Wiſdom, Juſtice, Temperance and Fortitude in all the Nation. The firſt inſtructed him in Religion, the ſecond taught him always to *ſpeak the Truth* the third to *ſubdue his Paſſions*, and the fourth to *fear nothing*. I may add *all* conſpired to make him *good*, not *one* to make him *learned*.

Aſtyages,

Our Gardens are adorned with Statues, and our Galleries with Pictures. But what, would you imagine, theſe Maſter-Pieces of Art that are expoſed to the Admiration of the Publick, repreſented? The Defenders of their Country, or thoſe ſtill more illuſtrious Men, who have enriched it by their Virtues? No—— They are Repreſentations of all the Irregularities of Reaſon and the Paſſions, carefully drawn out of the antient *Mythology*, and expoſed betimes to the Curioſity of our Children; undoubtedly that they may have

Aſtyages, in *Xenophon*, demands of *Cyrus* an Account of his laſt Leſſon. It was this, ſays he, a greatBoy in our School having a little Robe, gave it to one of hisCompanions, who was leſs than himſelf, and took away from him his Robe which was larger. Our Preceptor having made me Judge of this Difference, it was my Opinion, that Things ſhould be left in that State, and that both of them ſeemed to be better accommodated in this Manner. Upon this he remonſtrated to me, that I had made a wrong Judgment; for I had only conſidered *Decency*; whereas I ought have regarded *Juſtice* in the firſt Place, which requires that no one ſhould be forced to part with his own Property. And, continues he, he was puniſhed, as they puniſh us in our Villages for having forgot the *Aoriſtus primus* of the Verb, τύπτω.

before their Eyes the Models of evil Actions, even before they are able to read.

FROM whence are all theſe Abuſes derived, if it be not from the fatal Inequality introduced among Men, by the Diſtinction of great Talents, and Contempt of the Virtues? This is the moſt evident Effect of all our Studies, and the moſt dangerous of all their Conſequences. We no longer aſk if a Perſon be a Man of Probity, but whether he has Talents; nor do we enquire, whether a Book be uſeful, but whether it be well written. Rewards are laviſhed away on a fine Wit, and Virtue remains without Honours. There are a thouſand Prizes propoſed for fine Diſcourſes, but not one for great Actions. Tell me, at the ſame Time, if the Glory acquired by the beſt of thoſe Diſcourſes that ſhall be *crowned* in this *Academy*, be comparable to the Merit of having been the FOUNDER of the Prize?

THE wiſe Man does not run after Fortune; but he is not inſenſible to Glory; and when he ſees it ſo unjuſtly diſtributed, his Virtue, which a little Emulation would have animated and rendered

dered advantageous to Society, languiſhes and dies in Miſery and Oblivion. This is what the Preference of agreeable Talents, to thoſe that are uſeful, will always produce at the long run, and what is too well confirmed by Experience, ſince the Arts and Sciences are revived among us. We have *Naturaliſts*, *Geometricians*, *Chymiſts*, *Aſtronomers*, *Poets*, *Muſicians*, *Painters*, —— but we have no more CITIZENS; or if we have any ſtill remaining, diſperſed up and down the Country, which we have abandoned, they periſh there in Contempt and Indigence. To ſuch a State are they reduced; ſuch are the Sentiments we entertain of thoſe, who provide for us the Bread we eat, and for our Children the Milk they are nouriſhed with.

I OWN, at the ſame Time, that the Evil is not ſo great, as it might poſſibly have been. The eternal *Providence* of God by placing ſalutary Simples near divers noxious Planets, and in the Subſtance of many venemous Creatures a Remedy for the Wounds they make, hath taught *Sovereigns*, who are his Miniſters, to imitate his Wiſdom. It is after his Example that out of the very

Boſom

Boſom of Arts and Sciences, the Sources of a thouſand Irregularities, that *great Monarch* * whoſe Glory will acquire new Luſtre from Age to Age, drew thoſe celebrated Societies, who are charged at once with the *dangerous Truſt* of human Learning, and the ſacred *Depoſitum* of Morals, by the Care they take to preſerve them in the greateſt Purity among themſelves, and to require the ſame in all the Members they admit.

Theſe wiſe Inſtitutions, confirmed by his *Auguſt* Succeſſor †, and imitated by all the Kings in *Europe*, will ſerve for a Check on Men of Letters, who all aſpiring to the Honour of being admitted into the *Academies*, will be watchful over their own Conduct, and endeavour to render themſelves worthy of it by uſeful *Works*, and irreproachable Morals. Among theſe Societies, thoſe who will make Choice of Subjects which are

* *Lewis* XIV. His Motives more probably were thoſe mentioned in page 5. See the Note *ibid.* Our Author ſeems to have forgot what he there advanced, which was never better verified, than in the Reign of the former of theſe Monarchs.

† *Lewis* XV.

proper

proper to animate the Love of Virtue in the Hearts of their *Citizens*, for the *Prize*, with which they honour *literary* Merit, will ſhew, that the ſame Love of Virtue reigns among themſelves; and will give the People a Pleaſure that is ſo rare and ſo charming; that of ſeeing learned Societies devoting themſelves to pour on Mankind not only the agreeable *Lights* of Knowledge, but alſo wiſe and ſalutary Inſtructions.

Let not *that* be uſed as an Objection which ſerves me but for an additional Proof. So much Care taken ſhews too plainly the neceſſity of exerting it; and we never ſeek for *Remedies* for *Evils* that have no Exiſtence. How comes it to paſs, that theſe, by their Inſufficiency, bear only the Character of ordinary Remedies: So many Eſtabliſhments, made in Favour of learned Men, are on that Account but ſo much the more apt to impoſe upon them as to the Objects of the Sciences, and to turn the Minds of Men to the Cultivation of them. It ſeems by the Precautions we take, that we have too many Hands to till the Ground, and that we feared we ſhould want Philoſophers. I will not venture here to draw

draw a Parallel between Agriculture and Philoſophy: It would be hardly ſupportable. I would only aſk, what is Philoſophy? What do the Writings of the moſt celebrated Philoſophers contain? What are the Leſſons *thoſe Lovers of Wiſdom* give us? To hear them, would not a Man take them for a Herd of *Quacks*, every one on his Part crying out in a publick Place; I am the only one who do not deceive you — Come to me! One pretends that there is no ſuch Thing as *Body*, and that the Whole is only Ideal and a meer *Repreſentation*. Another that there is no other *Subſtance* but *Matter*, nor any other *God* but the *World*. This, advances that there is neither Virtue nor Vice, and that moral Good and Evil are *Chimæras*. That again, that Men are ſo many Wolves, and may devour one another with a good Conſcience. O illuſtrious Philoſophers! Why do you not reſerve theſe profitable Leſſons for your Friends and for your Children; you would ſoon receive the Reward of them, and we ſhould not doubt to find among *ours* ſome of your Followers.

THESE are the ſurprizing Men, on whom the Eſteem of their Contemporaries was laviſhed, during their Lives, and to whom Immortality was reſerved, after their Death. Theſe are the wiſe Maxims which we have received from them, and tranſmit to our Deſcendants from Age to Age. Has *Paganiſm*, abandoned to all the Errors and Irregularities of human *Reaſon*, left to Poſterity any Thing that can be compared to the ſhameful Monuments which PRINTING hath raiſed for it under the Reign of the *Goſpel?* The impious Writings of the *Lencippus*'s and *Diagoras*'s are periſhed with them. Men had not then invented the Art of eternizing the *Extravagancies* of human Wit. But, Thanks to the *Typographic Characters* *, and the Uſe we make of them,

* If we conſider the terrible Diſorders *Printing* has already cauſed in *Europe*; if we judge of the Future by the Progreſs which this Evil makes from Day to Day, it is eaſy to foreſee, that Princes will not delay to take as much Pains to baniſh this dangerous Art from their Dominions, as they did at firſt to eſtabliſh it. The Sultan *Achmet*, giving Way to the Importunities of ſome pretended Men of *Taſte*, conſented to ſet up a *Preſs* at *Conſtantinople*. But it was hardly ſet in Order, before they were obliged to deſtroy it, and to throw

them, the dangerous *Reveries* of the *Hobbs*'s and *Spinoſa*'s will remain for ever. Go, ye celebrated Writings, which the Ruſticity of our Fathers had never been capable of; accompany, down to Poſterity, thoſe ſtill more dangerous *Works* from whence the Corruption of the Morals of our Age exhales, and hand down to future Ages at the ſame Time a faithful Hiſtory of the Progreſs, and the Advantages of our Arts and Sciences. If they read you, you will leave them under no Doubt or Perplexity about the Queſtion we are treating of this Day: And at leaſt, unleſs they ſhould be more infatuated than we are, they will lift up their Hands to Heaven, and ſay

throw the Inſtruments into a deep Pit. It is ſaid the *Calif Omar*, being conſulted about what was to be done with the Library at *Alexandria*, anſwered in theſe Terms. If the Books in this Library contain Things contrary to the *Alcoran* they are bad, and muſt be burned. If they contain nothing but the Doctrine of the *Alcoran*, burn them ſtill: They are ſuperfluous. Our learned Men have cited this Reaſoning as the Height of Abſurdity. At the ſame Time, ſuppoſe *Gregory the Great* in *Omar*'s Place, and the *Goſpel* in that of the *Alcoran*, the Library would likewiſe have been burned, and that perhaps would have been the moſt beautiful Paſſage in the Life of that illuſtrious Pontif.

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in the Bitterneſs of their Soul, " Omnipotent " God! Thou who holdeſt in thy Hand the " Minds of Men, deliver us from the Know- " ledge and fatal Arts of our Fathers, and re- " ſtore to us again Ignorance, Innocence, and " Poverty, which are the only Qualifications " that are conducive to our Happineſs, and are " precious in thy Sight."

But if the Progreſs of Arts and Sciences has added nothing to our true Felicity; if it has corrupted our Morals, and if the Corruption of our Morals has infected the Purity of our *Taſte*; what can we think of that Crowd of *Elementary Authors*, who have removed from the Temple of the *Muſes* the Difficulties which defended its Entrance, and which Nature had planted there, as a Proof of the Strength of thoſe, who ſhould be tempted to ſeek after Knowledge? What ſhall we ſay to thoſe *Compilers* of Works, who have indiſcreetly broke open the *Gate* of the Sciences, and introduced into their Sanctuary a vile Populace, unworthy to approach them; when it were to be wiſhed, that all thoſe who could not advance *far* in the Carreer of *Letters*, had been re-

pulſed at the Entrance, and thrown themſelves into Arts that are uſeful to Society. Such a one, who makes but a bad *Verſifier* or an indifferent *Geometrician* all his Life time, would, perhaps, have been an excellent *Weaver of Stuffs*.

THOSE who were deſigned by Nature to make *Diſciples*, had no need of *Maſters* themſelves. The *Verulams*, the *Deſcartes* and the *Newtons*, thoſe, who were Preceptors to Mankind, had none themſelves; and what Guides could have conducted them ſo far as their vaſt Genius led them? Maſters of an ordinary Stamp would have only ſtraitened their Underſtanding, by confining it within the narrow Capacity of their own. It was by encountering the firſt Obſtacles in their Way, that they learned to make Efforts, and exerciſed themſelves in ſurmounting the immenſe Space, which they traverſed. If we muſt ſuffer ſome Men to give themſelves up to the Study of Arts and Sciences, it muſt be only thoſe, who find themſelves ſtrong enough to *go alone* in their Steps, and even to out-run them: To theſe few it belongs to raiſe Monuments to the Glory of the HUMAN MIND. But if a Man

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is perſuaded that nothing is above his Genius, it is neceſſary that nothing ſhould be thought above his Hopes. This is the only Encouragement they have need of. The Mind inſenſibly proportions itſelf to the Objects it is converſant with, and it is to great Opportunities we owe great Men. The Prince of Eloquence was Conſul of ROME, and perhaps the greateſt of Philoſophers Lord Chancellor of ENGLAND. Can we believe, if *one* had been only a Profeſſor in ſome *Univerſity*, and the *other* had but a ſmall Penſion in an *Academy*; can we believe, I ſay, that their Works would not have ſavoured of their State of Life? May Kings never diſdain to admit into their Councils thoſe who are capable of adviſing them: May they renounce that antient Prejudice, invented by the Pride of the *Great*, that the Art of governing the People is a harder Taſk than that of inſtructing them: As if it was leſs difficult to perſuade Men to do well voluntarily, than to conſtrain them to do it by Force. May learned Men, of the firſt Rank, find an honourable *Aſylum* in their Courts. May they obtain there the only Reward worthy of them; that of contributing by their Credit to the Happineſs of thoſe Nations, which

which they ſhall inſtruct in Wiſdom. Then indeed may we ſee, what Virtue, Knowledge and Authority, animated with a noble Emulation, and working in Concert for the Happineſs of Mankind, can do. But as long as Power is entirely on one Side, and Wiſdom and Knowledge on the other; the Learned will ſeldom think of great Things, Princes will more rarely do noble Actions, and the People will remain corrupt, baſe and wretched.

As for us, who are of the vulgar Stamp, to whom Heaven has not imparted ſuch great Talents, nor deſigned for ſo much Glory, let us remain in our Obſcurity. Let us not hunt after a Reputation, which would be always out of our Reach, and which, in the preſent State of Things, would never make amends for the Trouble and Pain it muſt coſt us, even if we had all the Qualifications neceſſary to obtain it. To what End therefore ſhould we ſeek after Happineſs in the Opinion of others, if we can find it within ourſelves? Let us leave to others the Care of inſtructing the People in their *Duty*, and let us confine

ourſelves

ourſelves to the faithful Diſcharge of our *own*; we have no need of knowing any more.

O VIRTUE! Sublime Science of plain and honeſt Minds. Muſt there be ſo much Trouble and Preparation to come to the Knowledge of thee? Are not thy Principles engraved on every Heart? And in order to underſtand thy Laws, is it not ſufficient for a Man to enter into himſelf, and to attend to the Voice of his Conſcience during the Silence of the Paſſions? This is true Philoſophy, let us learn to be ſatisfied with it; and without envying the Glory of thoſe famous Men, who immortalize themſelves in the *Republick of Letters*, let us endeavour to make this glorious Diſtinction between them and ourſelves, which was formerly obſerved between two great People; that the one knew how to SPEAK well, and the other to DO well.

FINIS.

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